



The world according to...

Tony Robinson

ACTOR, AUTHOR AND PRESENTER, AGE 64, BORN LONDON



NEW SERIES DOWN UNDER WITH TONY ROBINSON Saturdays from Sat 25, 10pm, History/HD (529)

He shot to fame in a historical sitcom, playing loveable buffoon Baldrick in *Blackadder*. But since then Tony Robinson has made a name for himself fronting serious shows that dig into the past – including hit series *Time Team*. This month, he is casting an inquisitive eye on the history of Australia – from its discovery, through colonial times and up to the present day. *sky magazine* caught up with Tony to get his take on life and his new series...

– it was the wettest and coolest summer Australia has had for two decades. It wasn't just a jolly!

There are many myths about Australia...

People always think the early convicts were all petty thieves. But huge numbers were political prisoners – these were smart, literate people. Many went out there as convicted felons, but within a couple of years created good little businesses for themselves.

The country's early days were brutal...

The prisoners who went out there and committed other crimes were treated abysmally, in a way that we all should still be ashamed of.

Always plan, but never plan your plans...

That's a brilliant adage an old hippy friend once said to me. It means be meticulous in your preparation, but flexible enough to change things when circumstances change.



Tony encounters Australian natives in his new series – including kangaroos, of course

Colonial-era Australia's worst job...

Being a convict who was forced to build a road into the outback. Gruelling, back-breaking work in such vicious conditions from which there was no escape.

My life has been full of fictional heroes...

As a child I read every book I could. I identified with every single hero in every single one of them, and probably still do.

The show's got something for everybody...

Kids, family men, sadists, masochists!

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I've always enjoyed the thrill of risks... If I hadn't dropped my A-levels to go to drama school, I think I'd have turned my limited capabilities towards being a professional gambler. I like the idea of wearing a DJ and being at a roulette table.

I've become a little jaded when it comes to real-life heroes – particularly political ones...

We all have feet of clay, and the closer you look at anybody, the more obvious the cracks in that clay are. We fall into a bad trap if we lionise too much.

It's some privilege to spend three months trekking around Australia...

I'd visited it before, but never in such a comprehensive way, where you get a real picture of so much of that huge continent.

I'm asked about a fifth *Blackadder* series...

As many times per day as I'm asked, 'Do you want to dig in my garden?'

Size and optimism were the first two things that struck me about Australia...

But that includes an awareness of potential futures, and understanding the past and where you came from.

INTERVIEW: NICK SCOTT

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